

Andrew Jackson to John Randolph, December 22, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN RANDOLPH.¹

¹ Handwriting of A. J. Donelson.

Washington, December 22, 1831.

D'r Sir, I have just recd. your letter of the 19th instant which I have read with much pleasure as a candid and frank expression of your opinions not the less valued because they differ from mine in some respects in the estimate which they place on a portion of my Cabinet, and of the views which they as well as myself entertain of some public questions.

You have done me no more than justice when you repelled with indignation the declaration that I had changed my views of the Bank of the United States. Nothing more foreign to truth could have been said. As at present organized I have uniformly on all proper occasions held the same language in regard to that institution: and that is that it has failed to answer the ends for which it was created, and besides being unconstitutional, in which point of view, no measure of utility could ever procure for it my official sanction, it is on the score of mere expediency dangerous to liberty, and therefore, worthy of the denunciation which it has recieved from the disciples of the old republican school.

Mr. McLane has on his own authority, in conformity with his sense of a positive duty which he did not feel at liberty to disregard and which it would have been unbecoming in me to controul, ventured the expression that the institution might be so modified as to strip it of the constitutional objections entertained by the Executive. In saying this it was far from his intention or wish to be understood as committing me in any manner to the friends of the

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Bank in the support of any scheme for obtaining a new charter. He saw that there were arrangements that might be favorably accommodated with the aid of a Bank provided it could be so modified or constructed as to obviate constitutional objections: and he felt it his duty to base his financial arrangements on this hypothesis.

But in doing this he has spoken for himself and has not committed me, and I feel confident that he is the last man who would desire to commit me on such a subject.

Rest assured, Sir, that Mr. McLane is a man of too much honor to play any game with me that may possibly make him a winner at the expense of the principles which are the rule of my administration.

P. S. [*in Jackson's handwriting*]. agreeable to your permission I have copied the first sheet of your letter and inclose you the original.